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SUBJECT: Argentina Reconsidering its Position on "Defamation of Religion" Resolution at the UN

CLASSIFIED BY: Thomas Kelly, Charge, STATE, EXEC; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) A Foreign Ministry contact informed poloff on January 13 that the Government of Argentina (GOA) is strongly reconsidering its previous position on the Defamation of Religion issue in the UN, and is very likely to change its position from abstaining to voting along with the United States. However, USG approach should not disclose any knowledge of this pending change in position as it could prompt a reversal. Argentine officials in Geneva and New York, in coordination with officials in Buenos Aires, have been advocating for such a change for some time. The contact shared that a decision was made at the highest levels last year not to accept the professional-level recommendation for reasons unknown to the contact. However, with a view toward regional partners like Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, the movement to change position has gained new traction and appears more likely to be accepted.

¶2. (C) Post welcomes the planned visit of IO Deputy Assistant Secretary Nossel in early February and will plan a full set of meetings with the appropriate officials involved in the decision-making process. The Ministry is determining which of its officials would be most appropriate for engaging with DAS Nossel. Post recommends that any approach to officials combine a focus on freedom of speech as a human right with an emphasis on changes in policy by like-minded Latin American countries.

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